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1. Editorial

Chris Duke



This issue of the PIMA Newsletter keeps a focus on the Sustainable Development Goals, the most significant beacon of ambitious hope as we try to learn better governance of a complex and largely by self-infliction perilous world. Our scan of the SIGs continues – special interest groups that PIMA is developing at the behest of the PASCAL Board to join the first Pascal SIG led by Ilpo Laitinen on the Pascal Website as work proceeds. Thomas Kuan reports on the keen interest in an SIG on lifelong learning and older adults as changing demography and rising life expectancy make new demands on our limited capacity to adapt and plan ahead. The Group is currently considering where among the many interests they should first concentrate.

PIMA may possibly bring people together round higher education institutions and the HE/Tertiary Education system. A third SIG theme canvassed for many months but yet to find a distinctive focus useful for new approaches in new times and is at present neglected. Bruce Wilson points out the connections between the different SDG goals, such that several interweave with the Goal of most interest to most educators, SDG 4. The same thing is illustrated by Rajesh Tandon's contribution which addresses the SDG SIG in terms of the role and contribution of HEIs.

Our 'Letters from...' section expands. To commentary from Australia and Canada is added a news and a view from Hungary, together with a long and by no means reassuring analysis of where France has arrived after the celebration of defeat for the far-right Front National candidate LePen, and the challenges facing the new young President Emmanuel Macron. Chris Brooks probes deeper issues of French culture in suggesting that this contemporary Shakespearean political drama had not yet played out. If anyone thinks this too bleak an assessment they might consult the UK Observer of 25 June 2017. Reporting on 'hard left' Jean-Luc Mélenchon's first appearance in the new Parliament, Kim Willsher reports from Paris that he 'raised a clenched fist and shouted "Resistance". It is a battle that will be fought in parliament and – as Mélenchon has made it clear – out on the streets if necessary'.

If anyone thinks this kind of news has no place in a Pascal outlet to do with lifelong and placed-based learning they may remind themselves that learning is a community and organisational as well as an individual activity; and that educators' love of truth and rationality has to cope with a world where populism has displaced the elegant rhetoric of yesteryear, and 'fake facts' hold their own against real truth, this rewriting reality. Chris Brooks is right to move culture centre-stage. Education as organised support for learning, must earn respect and valuing if it is to be publicly supported.

The Newsletter again carries member news and views together with selected resources and upcoming events. Discussions are continuing to see how PASCAL as an Observatory with a Website as a main information and communications source, and the PIMA Newsletter, as a somewhat different style of medium, can best complement each other and each used to best effect. The Website for example carries frequent and useful news about the activities of other bodies operating in our broad field, and the Newsletter's 'upcoming events' contributions might better go straight there. Reader views about this and about how to get the PASCAL message and knowledge out and more widely shared will be very welcome.

Please continue sending contributions for future issues to me at chris.duke@rmit.edu.au.

2. Special Interest Groups

PIMA Special Interest Group on Sustainable Development Goals

Bruce Wilson

PIMA established a Special Interest Group on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in late 2016. The SIG has canvassed a range of ways of contributing useful insights to investigate questions of the implementation of the SDGs. The group is preparing a series of papers which address one or the other of three of the SDGs, focusing particularly on the learning that is implicit in the implementation process. It is hoped that these pieces will be ready for sharing by about mid-2017. Apart from looking at each of the 3 pieces and refining them, the whole group will then consider the implications of their work for thinking about SDG 4, on Education and Lifelong Learning. This latter task represents in particular the recognition that the SDGs are deeply interconnected; it is very difficult to address one SDG without paying some attention to others. The thinking will be ready to share by August 2017.

Here is one example of the many events being convened around the SDGs. The question will be how many nations see this as really applying to them and doing something about it at home – or is this just for other people in poorer faraway places?

International Conference on Sustainable Development Goals: Actors and Implementation

17 goals to change the world! The International Conference on Sustainable Development Goals: Actors and Implementation is a leading international meeting aiming to create a permanent and multidisciplinary knowledge network on implementation of SDGs, where all stakeholders will learn from each other: universities, governments, cities and public and social agencies.

Held in Barcelona, September 18-19, 2017, it will gather multidisciplinary experts and high-level practitioners from around the world to exchange knowledge, ideas, experiences and expectations around the challenges involved with the SDGs. Through a combination of keynote presentations by renowned experts, round tables and parallel sessions, the conference wants to open a debate among the different stakeholders on solutions for a sustainable development to transform society at local and global level.

The conference is one of the activities organized by the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNi) as part of the International Summer School on Higher Education and Research Leadership activities. It aims to provide intellectual guidance and scientific evidences to the challenges of SDGs, with a humanist and critical thinking, promoting research and education to build a fair global community and more sustainable societies.

<http://www.guninetwork.org/activity/international-conference-sustainable-development-goals-actors-and-implementation>

PIMA Special Interest Group on Older Adults

Thomas Kuan

The SIG on Older Adults was established by PIMA in collaboration with PASCAL in early May 2017, to explore our common interest in understanding policies and practices relating to later lifelong learning.

The name 'older adults' is interim, and subject to change, but it is appropriate (at this time) as it represents a mass population of 900 million people aged 60 years or over in 2015. This population is expected to grow to 1.4 billion by 2030 (World Ageing Report; UN 2015). How will Education Agenda 2030 (which is just 13 years from now) affect older adults' later learning in the face of advancing learning technologies and social media which will bring probable changes in learning behaviour? Policies worldwide are beginning to give attention to older adults learning for '... sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace...' (UNESCO Education 2015: 18 - Goal 4.7).

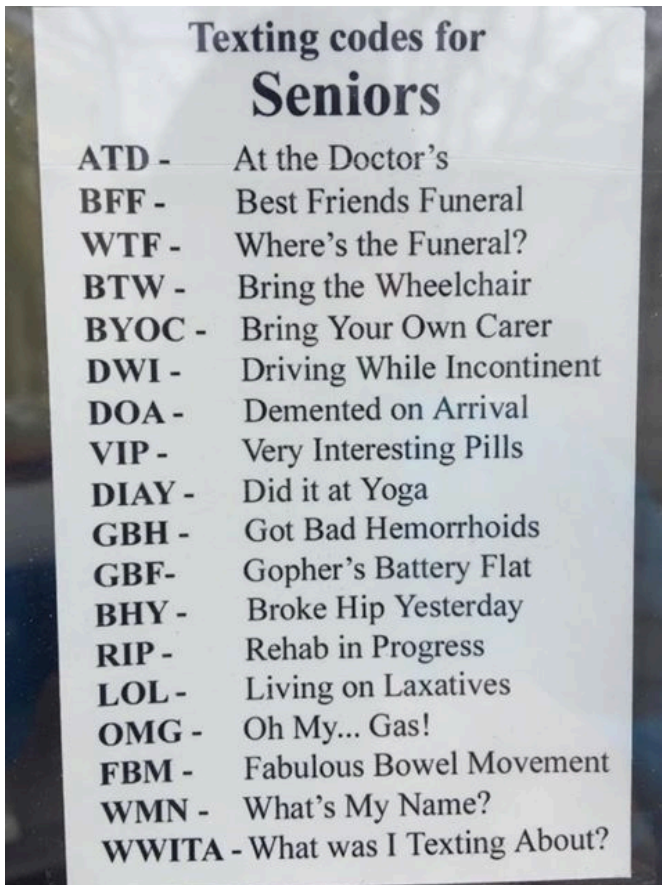
This SIG will focus on older adults in their third age [ie post-retirement era]. It hopes to facilitate lifelong learning and education of the target population, as a basic human right. It is also hoped that the SIG will add another layer of connectivity between older adults in East and West, and build trust in cross-cultural collaboration and learning.

The SIG was formed with 13 members. It has since expanded to 18 members from both East and West. We have members from Australia (4), China (3), Germany (1), India (1), Ireland (1), Korea South (1), Macao (1), Singapore (1), Taiwan (1), Thailand (1) New Zealand (1), and the UK (2). As of June 2017 members are: Thomas Kuan, Singapore (Convenor of SIG Older Adults); Lawrence Tsui, Macao; Brian Findsen, NZ; Alexandra Withnall, UK; Bernhard Schmidt-Hertha, Germany; Archanya Ratana-Ubol, Thailand; Sajjan Singh, India; Hsiu Mei TSAI, Taiwan; NamShun KIM, South Korea; Barry Golding, Australia; Brendan O'Dwyer, Australia; Dayong Yang, China; Peter Kearns, Australia; Denise Reghenzani-Kearns, Australia; Robin Webster, Ireland; Xia Qing, Annie, China; Xiagmei Jia, China; David Istance, France.

This strongly recruited Group is currently discussing possible priorities for initial focus. Proposed areas currently under consideration include:

- Lawrence Tsui looks forward to a platform to share useful policies, strategies, activities and even skills to tackle some similar problems of ageing societies in China, HK and Macao.
- Peter Kearns has suggested 'Learning by seniors in the context of demographic change and ageing populations'- comparative approaches in China and Europe. The SIG could explore this theme in many countries such as Japan, Korea, China, and Hong Kong. There are also related issues of social costs, meeting workforce needs, focus on innovation, etc that can be explored.
- Thoughts from Robin Webster are: 'to learn and to contribute to a better understanding of learning in later life (within the life-course approach) and the research, policies and programmes that best support it based on our varied experience from different parts of the world'.

If these topics interest you, please write to Thomas Kuan: kuanthomas@gmail.com.



Here is a satirical item from LinkedIn that came to us via **Glen Postle**, himself a remarkable leader on intergenerational learning, that brings alienated youngster and lonely retired people together for mutual social and learning benefit!

Towards a PIMA Special Interest Group on Higher and Tertiary Education?

Should PASCAL via PIMA be considering a new focus on Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as vehicles for socially engaged learning and development? Items in previous recent Newsletters have considered further, technical and ‘college’ education, implying a case for thinking tertiary, not just higher.

A paper by PIMA Member Rajesh Tandon suggests one persuasive approach (See item 3 over page). Many discussions involve or assume a main role for HEIs. PIMA has had the idea under review for some time. We tend to divide into two camps: 1) those wishing to brainstorm and analyse where, why and how HE should move faster towards universal HE, and LLL based on local-regional community partnership and change; and 2) those who wish rather discourse to get on with doing things, perhaps like the former PURE (Pascal Universities and Regional Engagement).

- From the Office of the Vice Rector for Social Action, University of Costa Rica**
 (With thanks to **Budd Hall** for passing this on)
- Recipe for Working with Community
 - Take 1 public university
 - Add people with sensitivity and dynamism
 - Season with commitment and ethics
 - Coat with new generations and humanistic learning
 - Mix knowledge and experience
 - And you? What would you add?

3. Higher and Tertiary Education

Contributions of Higher Education to the SDGs

Rajesh Tandon

In May 2017 Rajesh Tandon offered a paper as Co-Chair, UNESCO Chair on Community Based Research & Social Responsibility in Higher Education on Contributions of Higher Education to SDGs. This links the SDGs, a Special Interest Group (SIG) theme, to another possible future SIG: engaged higher education. *Making the Commitment*, Rajesh's paper, may be accessed at: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material/>

We are reminded that the United Nations system universally adopted SDGs in 2015 as a beacon for socially, economically and ecologically sustainable development. 'This Agenda 2030 establishes 17 Goals which are universally applicable for all countries of the world. Within this globally agreed universally applicable SDGs, each country (and many provinces) have developed (or are in the process of developing) specific nationally and locally relevant benchmarks and indicators for achieving these commitments.'

After listing a series of deficits obstructing this, the paper continues: "Higher education and its myriad institutions can address this knowledge, learning and collaboration deficit in achievement of SDGs." This is the key message that came through the international consultation convened by Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) in the 2013-15 period:

"The higher education sector's efforts to prepare to respond to the Post-2015 agenda require new thinking in terms of scale and modality. As national institutions addressing global challenges, universities need to be able to incorporate diverse demands and diverse stakeholders into their own agendas. Contributors also highlighted the need for change and adaptation within the sector."

As Tandon continues: "Such a contribution from higher education institutions (HEIs) is possible if higher education is viewed within the larger societal context, and not merely as educating for jobs and livelihoods". In his view it must first be agreed that the overarching purpose of higher education is as a shared 'public good'.

"In such a reformulation of core missions, HEIs can become socially relevant by performing [the established] functions effectively. Viewed in this sense, universities do not need to do anything different, or additional, to be socially responsible. They should do their core work differently. Learning emphasis in teaching function would require reviewing curriculum and pedagogy to become socially relevant. An engaged, outward, trans-disciplinary stance will enable enriching the curriculum and promoting learning in multi-modal pedagogies (in addition to the classroom & lab).

Socially relevant knowledge generation and mobilisation will require valuing diversity of forms, systems and modes of knowledge and knowledge production. It will require valuing indigenous, practical, experiential knowledge, in addition to theoretical and experimental. It will entail respecting epistemic diversity and community-university research partnerships. New competencies in community-based participatory research will need to be learnt to practice such an engaged stance in research.' The paper then analysis what this means for each of the core functions of teaching and learning, and research and knowledge, before returning to 'engaged service'."

And what will make it work. Tandon proposes the following. Asking "what kinds of actions may be required for a supportive eco-system to emerge that spurs HEIs to make their contributions towards realisation of SDGs?", he proposes the following:

- First and foremost, leadership of HEIs and universities must encourage institution-wide appreciation of and learning about SDGs. Platforms of Vice-Chancellors and university presidents must put this urgently on their agenda.
- National and provincial ministries responsible for higher education policy and Higher Education Councils in all countries must encourage, mandate and resource such shifts towards linking the core functions of HEIs and universities to SDGs.
- Associations of teachers, researchers and universities can play a mobilising role to generate demand for such an engagement with SDGs. Such networks and associations can place SDG on the agenda of their forthcoming meetings.
- Students can become key champions of higher education engagement with SDGs. Local, national and international student associations can focus on SDGs in their forthcoming meetings, thereby generating demand for university authorities to act.
- International networks and associations of universities and their leaders can do likewise to promote engagement with SDGs. International Association of Universities (IAU) is one such example. Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) had taken a lead in the run-up to SDGs and made great contributions. Other regional and sectoral associations can also be so mobilised.
- UNESCO has a special role to play in this regard. It is holding a special meeting of UNESCO Chairs this month in this regard. Its regional and national associations and offices should be proactively convening dialogues with universities to promote such engagement with SDGs.
- Global University Network for Innovations (GUNI) is already playing such a role in partnership with UNU. It has convened a special conference in this regard in September 2017.
- Finally, civil society needs to focus its attention on higher education and its institutions. There has been somewhat puzzling apathy amongst civil society leaders, activists, networks and platforms to engage with HEIs-universities, colleges, technical institutes, etc. in order to make them accountable to their own missions.

4. Letters from...

This issue of 'Letters' dwells on the relief experienced in France that the Front National had just been roundly defeated by the young unknown Macron, and the doubts that our correspondent (and others) holds as to where this will lead. Meanwhile another young leader, in Canada, has clocked up approaching two years, to an outside viewer doing well even with a disrupting neighbour over the long border with the United States. German-Canadian Hans Schuetze examines three aspects of the Trudeau Administration; a fourth is carried over to our subsequent issue. What are we learning, and what and how are nations learning – as young Trudeau and Macron make it, while 'old lefties' Sanders and Corbyn in the US and the UK shake but do not quite unseat the respective 'political classes'? *Editor*



Letter from Australia, Bruce Wilson

Crisis of Western Democracy: Leadership vs policies

Australia is distinguished by the instability in its political leadership over the past decade. After having had one Prime Minister in 11 years, and three in 25, we have now had 5 in the past 10 (one of them twice). The current Prime Minister, having ousted the then Prime Minister through an internal Party coup, won his first election last July by one seat. This is hardly a recipe for constructive government, yet at the same time, Australia has just notched up its 26th successive year of

continuous economic growth. The broad policy framework actually implemented varies at the margins

This pattern raises several questions. Do parliamentary politics count for less these days, only marginally affecting economic, social or environmental outcomes? Does the logic of an increasingly interconnected and dynamic global economy mean that economic cycles continue, less subject to the influence of public policy? To what extent are political fortunes dependent not so much on ideology, or political achievement, but on mood – intangible psychological dynamics, those processes which give citizens more or less confidence about their livelihood, and the quality of life that they can look forward to?

Yet the recent experiences in the UK and parts of Europe indicate that politics do matter, and that many citizens are indeed interested in the programs which different politicians put forward. Far from being a surprise, the results of the British election of the past month suggest that those people who have voted have looked at the policies of all political parties and have responded according to the extent that the advocates were able to persuade them. The Labour Party, as it has in the past two years, emphasised the importance of an end to austerity, and the power of hope which comes from embracing education. The commitment of the Conservative Party to a further tightening of the public purse, in a time in which the UK will experience possibly unprecedented change, gave no confidence that the many citizens would be any better off than they are now.

On the other side of the Channel, on the other hand, the established parties have not been able to offer any confidence at all that their approach would address the persistent unemployment and social divide which France has experienced for many years. Macron not only offered hope, he addressed citizen concerns through identifying the specific areas of change which would offer some momentum to an economy and society which has stuttered in recent years.

While much has been said about leadership, the respective qualities of May, Corbyn, Macron and Le Pen, it seems at least as reasonable to presume that the reasons for the electoral outcomes have not been the role of the key personalities, per se, but rather the underlying policies which the leaders have had to offer, and the extent to which they were able to present those policies as real options.

To return to the Australian situation, and this approach seems reasonable here, also. Labor lost national government dramatically in 2013 after 6 years of increasing division and loss of confidence. However, in the subsequent 3 years, a new leadership focused on policy issues such that when the election was called in 2016, they were able to present 100 distinct policy initiatives, many of which addressed the basic issues about standards of living and quality of life. Perhaps that's reason why they nearly won government, not because of any particular personality campaign but because of their policy proposals which addressed ordinary people's concerns.



Letter from Canada, Hans Schuetze

The Trudeau Government

Canada's new Liberal federal government, elected in Oct 2015, is not so new anymore yet it is still compared, mostly very favourably by the majority of Canadians, with the Conservative government it replaced after ten years in power. The new young prime minister brought not just a fresh face to the job but also many fresh ideas, many of them at odds with those of his dour predecessor. He is quite charismatic and popular, even with many of those who would have preferred a social-democratic or green government, or a coalition thereof - unrealistic under the awkward and antiquated first-around-the-post electoral system that was inherited from Britain. It helps that the new one comes from a well-known family background: his father, Pierre Trudeau had been prime minister for a total of 15 years (from 1968 on) and reformed Canada in many fundamental ways, in

particular by severing most of the remaining constitutional ties with Britain, Canada's colonial master (the one remaining is that the Queen is formally still Canada's head of state, unlike Australia, nobody seems to mind that, maybe because she and her family spent the war years here?).

Son Justin Trudeau, a high school teacher by training, is well educated, sportive, eloquent, charismatic and diplomatic. He has surrounded himself with a competent cabinet including representatives of the various minorities, e.g. from indigenous and Indo-Canadian communities. Half of the cabinet is female. He has been one of the active proponents of the Paris climate accord, even if, as his critics argue, he is not strictly observing it, for example when he authorized a couple of major oil pipe lines to transport oil from the dirty tar sands in land-locked Alberta to deep sea ports at the Pacific Coast and the Gulf of Mexico. He is a free trader and has just signed a major free trade agreement (CETA) with the European Union. In many ways he looks like the antipode to the man who was elected a year later in the country South of the Canadian border.

Immigration

[Schuetze's first major issue, Indigenization in Canada, is carried over to a subsequent Newsletter. Ed.] A second theme with consequences for higher education emanates from (regional) geopolitics. Trudeau father is quoted as saying that Canada's position is like sharing the bed with a 500 pound gorilla and, in order to survive, one must behave accordingly and move extremely carefully. With the present bedfellow being not just huge but also erratic, irrational and xenophobic, this co-habitation or proximity can have negative as well as beneficial consequences for Canada. One of the benefits might be a greater inflow of US immigrants. This is based on the expectation that, like in the late 1960s to the mid-seventies, when thousands of Americans who opposed the Vietnam War and the military draft came to Canada. During the Vietnam War, between 1966 and 1975, almost a quarter of a million (240,000) Americans moved to Canada, almost twice the number in the previous decade. In spite of an amnesty for draft dodgers most of these Vietnam War immigrants stayed in Canada. Many of these were male, young, and well educated. Likewise the expectation is probably not unrealistic that people especially with a Muslim immigrant background will move North to Canada to escape Trump's 'Americans first', politics.

Increased internationalization of post-secondary education

There will probably be another benefit for Canada from the current xenophobic climate South of the border. Until recently, a sizeable share of international students taking up studies in one of the Western countries would enroll in a college in the US (followed by the UK and Canada). By contrast, Canada was a less popular destination due to complicated visa procedures and unclear information about access requirements and available programs. This has already started changing: After changing and simplifying visa rules (graduates can now stay and work in Canada), and providing better information about the Canadian system, international students enrolment in Canada between 2008 and 2015 almost doubled to more than 350.000 students.

With the changing climate in the US and especially the – partly unsuccessful – attempts by the Trump administration to strictly block entry from Muslim countries including for post-secondary students, many of these students will probably apply to Canadian post-secondary institutions rather than seeking admission in the US. For Canada this will not only mean increased income from full fees required from foreign students as well as money spent in the local economy on living and consumption. It will also mean access to a greater pool of highly educated immigrants since Canada has relied, for many years now, on recruiting immigrants from the ranks of its international graduates.

Electoral reform

In spite of hopes that the new government would make the electoral system fairer and give smaller parties a chance, Trudeau's promises at reforming the electoral system has clearly been broken.

Officially, the Liberal cabinet was concerned that proportional representation could open the door to smaller regional or fringe parties in the House of Commons, including the alt-right, a loosely defined political movement that includes white nationalists and white supremacists. The opposition claims that the reform has been given up out of fear by the Liberals that they would lose their parliamentary majority (which is not based on a majority of votes, but is the result of the first-around-the-post system) if they went ahead with their promise of electoral reform, introducing either a system of proportional representation or a preferential ballot which allows voters to rank candidates. As a result, electoral reform has been put on the back burner if not abandoned altogether.



Letter from France, Chris Brooks

The Ides of March: A play in two acts with a third act yet to come

I promised to give my thoughts on what happened in the recent French presidential election. I started this letter ahead of the legislative elections. I decided not to finish because I was caught between a mixture of high enthusiasm and serious foreboding. What I wrote at that time is as follows. What I have added is indicated as new text post legislative elections.

Act I

It seems likely that President Macron will have a working majority in Parliament. French society seems very relieved that the new President is capable, indeed even inspiring. Without wishing to dampen the enthusiasm- indispensable for giving him a working majority in the new parliament – I believe that French society is in poor shape and that the coming months will be very difficult.

One of the best political observers I ever read was William Shakespeare - political scientist, sociologist, anthropologist, historian as well as playwright. He understood power better than most. On the eve of the legislative elections I am thoughtful of his passage in Julius Caesar when the soothsayer warns Caesar of the Ides of March.

" Beware the ides of march"

Caesar dismisses him

" He is a dreamer. Let us leave him. Pass".

Caesar's wife, Calpurnia brings us back to the dangers of the circumstances who, through her nightmares in Caesar's bed cries out three times

" Help, ho, They murder him"

In the ensuing debate there are two memorable passages, both worth recounting for their own sake but also for their contextual value.

Calpurnia

"Caesar, I have never stood on ceremonies.

Yet now they fright me. There is one within,

Besides the things that we have heard and seen,

Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.

A lioness hath whelped in the streets,

And graves have yawned and yielded up their dead.

Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds,

In ranks and squadrons and right form of war,

Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol.

The noise of battle hurtled the air.

Horses do neigh, and dying men did groan,

And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.

O Caesar, these things are beyond all use,

And I do fear them."

In the conversation that follows, Calpurnia, his wife, seeks to persuade him of the imminent dangers and there is wonderful exercise of vanity from Caesar.

Caesar

"Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear,
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come."

Caesar meets the soothsayer once again and reminds him

"The Ides of March are come"

and the soothsayer replies

"Ay, Caesar, but not gone"

This passage reminds us of the need to fear vanity and be cautious of our sometime friends. I do not fear the physical assassination of Emmanuel Macron but I do fear that the future could be treacherous; his election is a better beginning but it is far from an end.

Act II (text added 19 June)

The first round of the Presidential election showed signs that perhaps France was in a pre-revolutionary state, certainly in an advanced state of disintegration. What might be called the credible strategies gained well less than 50 per cent of the votes. The disastrous proposals of Madame LePen, Mr Melenchon, Mr Dupont Aigan, and others gained over 50 per cent. I leave to one side the socialist party- with 6.5 per cent- which was more utopian or perhaps naive, but not really a disastrous proposal. The second round could have easily been between Mr Melenchon and Madame LePen or indeed between Mr Fillon and Mr Melenchon. In the end it was between Mr Macron and Madame LePen.

The second round of the Presidential election produced euphoria. Mr Macron won by 66 to 34. But how did Madame LePen increase her vote by more than 50 per cent? And why was the turnout lower when the choice was so critical? Roughly one quarter of Mr Fillons voters went to LePen, with roughly 12 per cent of Melenchon's voters and nearly 90 per cent of Dupont Aigan's. A significant percentage did not vote, or voted blanche or nul.

What this shows is a very high percentage of the electorate being so angry with the system that vengeance, hatred or pure stupidity was the motivating factor behind their votes. The French have always found compromise difficult; the ideological self-brain-washing is often hard to believe or understand. But one cannot escape the conclusion that the institutional system of government had so angered many people that they were willing to blow it up.

Many people thought that the French State had voided the "social contract". For over a third of the electorate it had shattered the intricate web of customary, legal and organisational relationships that govern daily life. Too many things occurred in a formless and fluid situation. Nothing was stable or even predictable. In much of the society respect was replaced by fear, tolerance by distrust and mutual protection by avariciousness (Fillon).

So as Thomas Hobbes warned his contemporaries in a comparable period of anarchy in late sixteenth and early seventeenth century England, when government falls apart and people lapse into a "state of nature", the hand of every man reaches out against his fellow. France came close to this. Foremost amongst the mobs were the informal groupings of LePenist and Melenchonist supporters. They can be compared with Comite de Salut Public in the period of The Great Terror in

the French Revolution. Both ferret out opponents rather in the way the French comites de surveillance had done in the revolution. Two major candidates where fanning hatred to encourage violence, continually attacking "the elite". The charge was led by LePen and Melenchon. Both are members of the elite; Mr Melenchon as a senior political personality for over 25 years and Madame LePen the rich inheritor who took over the political movement and money-making machine of her father. We must ask ourselves why the use of this word, and the accusation that the elite were responsible for others misfortunes, was so powerful.

What was being attacked was the new cultural elite of very well qualified under fifty-year-olds who went to good universities and are intolerant of others. They think they run - or should run - the world. They are obsessed by environmental concerns to the exclusion of almost anything else, they despise working class people and privately joke about their food habits and body shapes. They are the "we know best generation".

Their arrogance played into the hands of Melenchon and LePen. Many are close, often very close, to Mr Macron. France will need to be very concerned that politics is also about generosity, compassion, understanding and empathy. Will the Government and the Parliament be able to rise to this? The indulgent discussion amongst this new cultural elite fails to understand that the anger and the isolation are still there.

The voting figures for the legislative elections are evidence of alienation or disintegration. Down to 50 per cent in the first round from 80 per cent and to under 45 per cent in the second round. In the period after the Presidential election Mr Macron was treated as a cheat, a liar, a fascist, etc., all in preparation for the next round of political activity in the autumn.

Can President Macron deal with these very alarming conditions? The third round has already started. Melenchon is actively organising the street, fanning the flames of what will be very violent street "demonstrations" when not only the left but also the fascist fringes of the LePen right will take to the barricades. They are the antechamber to fascism and they are very determined. There will be organised rejection of whatever the Macron government proposes. It is less a question of content than of the irrationality that Melenchon and Lepen have made legitimate. It will be very difficult for the police to control the situation; maintaining law and order will in some circumstances be impossible. It is likely that some people will be killed some possibly by police bullets and charging; this in the context of a highly disillusioned population wanting jobs, better incomes, a sense of a society which takes them into account, and respect, all things which, with the best will and policy in the world, will take time to produce

The coming months will be very difficult, but critical to the long term future of France. President Macron has a good majority in the Parliament; he enjoys the good will of a large part of the middle class and the up and coming young. He is intelligent and courageous, convincing to rational people, so all is far from lost. But he must address the absolute urgency of reducing precarity, of generating jobs for the less qualified and starting a process of income and wealth redistribution which helps the poor and the traditional working class directly rather than swelling the already bloated State which has failed to deliver to the bottom 40 per cent of French society. He needs to tame selfish individualism through a sort of cultural revolution. It is as much about changing minds as redistributing money and wealth. But as we know how to do the latter we should start there.

And Act III?

I had wanted to comment on the role of the new social media, misinformation, the way the new technologies make debate impossible etc, but I will leave this to another time. Needless to say all were important issues in the elections in France.

Letter from Hungary, Balázs Németh

The temperature indicates that Summer has arrived into my country. But not only the weather is warm, also the political climate has been warmed up in recent years to result in an extremely fragmented society, unsatisfied communities and very much pessimistic youth.

As Hungary is heading towards a next general election to come in April-May of 2018, one can easily recognise that the political opposition is broken into pieces, left-wing and liberal ideas are struggling to get back their positions and gain some significant public support. But, Hungary, opposite to Britain, is a country of dissatisfactions and short-sighted beliefs where the government is providing a chain of illusions with quasi-enemies, namely, Brussels, George Soros, the Central-European University, NGOs, Norwegian Grants system, etc.

At the same time, public education is in ruins, public health care system and its hospitals, public transport are not at all developing while some relative modernisation of those welfare service sectors are due to European funds supporting the renewal of those welfare service sectors. The problem we face is even more severe, as the country, on the one hand loses lots of talented graduating intellectuals (doctors, teachers, engineers, midwives, nurses, etc.) and skilled young people to perform as plumbers, carpenters, brick-layers, etc.) and, on the other, many young boys and girls have difficulties in learning, both in performance and in participation.

The recent EU Commission figure shows that the number of adult learners has been raised to 7.2 % of the adult public, but the OECD PISA results of last year forecast a dramatic fall in the generic skills of young grammar school-age students which determine the skills shortages of young adults too. (Education and Training Monitor EC, 2016)

Hungary has gained rather bad media attention because of the specific handling of the migrant crisis. By being a so-called Schengen-border of the European Union, we have to defend the borders of the EU, but the radical action of building a barbed-wired wall alongside the southern border of the country resulted in both critics and support at the same time. Critics came to question the very cold-blooded reaction of controlling borders and fighting back 'illegal border-pass' at the former green-border from the direction of Serbia and Croatia. This very conflicting issue resulted in Hungary rejecting the EU's migrant quota to host any number of migrants having arrived either to Italy or to Greece through the seas.

Another sad story is the way that the current government has passed a new law on NGOs, similar to Russian and Turkish examples, which receive foreign financial support or grants with an amount higher than approx. 25.000 EUR/year, to formally declare themselves as foreign agents regardless of their non-profit activities in social or youth work, health-care, environmental protection, civil rights, culture and arts, public education, minority affairs, etc. It is very absurd that the government, by calling for transparency, tries to marginalise NGOs which are critical to dominating ruling parties' interests and call for real balance of power. Some opposition leaders label those actions of the ruling parties as 'Putinization, or Erdoganisation', of politics. And the EU leaders mostly focus on BREXIT which is another symptom of populist politics on the rise.

And while many people may think that France has pushed back the populism of Le Pen, and Germany will fight back AFD, we are very pessimistic upon what may happen soon in Austria, Sweden or in Romania and Slovakia at the next elections.

But I do think that Hungary is a democracy, so long as we have free elections. Although election rules support parties having strong national support, people have the right to signal their wish, and they can still change government if they recognise the strength of their own voice.

Happier news is that my town, the City of Pécs has won, amongst another fifteen countries, the UNESCO Global Learning City Award. The application is a good example of the collaboration in between the University of Pécs and the City Council. PASCAL Observatory and Chris Duke with Mike Osborne have done a lot to involve the University into several Learning City projects which resulted in the establishment of the Pécs Learning City-Region Forum as a platform for urban developments through lifelong learning in cultural, environmental and pedagogical innovations and necessary knowledge transfer. As part of this project, the City of Pécs is organising its first Learning Festival for 15 September when the University is celebrating its 650th Jubilee of Foundation in the year of 1367.

The UNESCO Global Learning City Award will be formally given to the Mayor of Pécs on 18 September at the 3rd UNESCO Learning City Conference in Cork, Ireland.

References:

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<http://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/learning-cities/sixteen-cities-receive-unesco-learning-city-award-2017>

<http://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/learning-cities/registration-open-third-international-conference-learning-cities>

5. New Member



Pat Inman

Pat Inman has been for many years a leading light for practical fieldwork and groundwork– rather literally in this case – as well as theory and advocacy, for sustainable agriculture, food security, food miles, and the conscientizing and mobilizing of local communities in these ecological causes.

As a key member of Northern Illinois University (NIU), the third university to join the original PASCAL after RMIT and Glasgow Universities, she has served for many years on the (formerly Advisory) Board of PASCAL; and contributed to Annual Conferences from Gabarone, in southern Africa where she still has professional links, to southern Europe, at the recent Conference in Catania. She also took part in the Pascal PURE project both as a host region and an expert who consulted to Darling Downs Region of South-West Queensland in Australia. Pat is a member of the PURE Special Interest SDG Group.

6. Member News & Views

Lifelong learning: a fresh start in the UK?

Martin Yarnit

Martin Yarnit asks us again to consider more fully the meaning and education policy implications of the rich concept of lifelong Learning. This comment from the UK in mid-Brexit crisis also picks up on the recent Newsletter theme of further and technical education started by Colin Flint and extended in the last issue also to Canada and Australia by Gavin Moodie. Comparative and other additional reflections on FE, the impoverishment (or other) of LLL and the role of government will be welcome from these and other countries in the next issue (*Ed.*)

Twenty years ago, Tony Blair's newly elected government launched the United Kingdom's most ambitious prospectus for adult learning of the century. Alongside it was a significant investment in

new buildings and more, better qualified, teachers. Schools and nurseries were funded to promote adult learning and Britain backed UNESCO's plan for an international adult learners' week.

Twenty years on, and the manifestos of the three major political parties all put forward plans for lifelong learning. Labour's commitment was the most profound and detailed, with a scheme for a cradle to grave National Education Service. Cause for optimism? Although, Labour failed to be elected to implement its proposals it is encouraging that lifelong learning is once again on the political agenda.

This is a welcome contrast with recent years. Labour's initial breadth of vision gradually narrowed to a preoccupation with skills, and the Conservative's preoccupation with austerity meant a massive decrease in public funding for further education colleges, a weakening of the national skills base, and a sharp fall in part-time student numbers. Meanwhile, it has to be said, there has been a major expansion of higher education, largely funded through the introduction of student tuition fees.

Balance and devolution

If Labour and the other parties are serious about relaunching lifelong learning, then there are some lessons to be learned from the period after 1997. The first is about balance. Lifelong learning must be about a coherent set of priorities:

1. Vocational education, of course, but not to the exclusion of everything else
2. Education for citizenship and social cohesion
3. Second chance adult education including digital skills, literacy and numeracy
4. Learning in the third age.

A second lesson is about devolving resources and decision-making so that towns and cities can determine what best meets their needs. National governments and politicians have wasted energy and money on constant reorganization of the bodies responsible for policy-making and implementation. Further education colleges - vital to skills and second chance education - have faced almost annual changes in direction, imposed by politicians and officials who have limited understanding or experience of their role.

Skills and informed advocacy

Finally, in the UK we need a rethink about skills. Too few employers, especially in small and medium sized enterprises, are engaged with vocational education and apprenticeships; nationally our understanding of the links between productivity and industrial processes is slender. Further education colleges should become local centres for economic development, offering practical resources to employers to enable them to develop their businesses in an era of robotisation and digitisation.

But most crucially we urgently need to rebuild lifelong learning expertise and to replace or recreate the sorely missed now defunct National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) as a national and global centre for policy development. This much admired institution - an international force under the direction of Alan Tuckett - lost momentum suddenly. After the financial crash funding dried up a new government had little sympathy for NIACE's visionary stance on adult learning. Its absorption into another body has left a yawning policy gap.

The UK, like all the advanced economies, faces the challenge of endless and accelerating change. Unlike our neighbours we must also confront the repercussions of leaving the EU and the social and economic adaptations that this will entail. This is the most compelling argument for a well-informed and serious national commitment to lifelong learning.

Confluence 2017

Budd Hall

In this news item Budd Hall revisits the chronic issue of loss and recovering of traditional wisdom and ways of seeing in introducing and deploying the term *epistemicide* (*Ed.*)

Organized by the Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity under the leadership of their Nabyama, Wangoola Wangoola Ndawula with support from the UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research, Inclusion Press and the Victoria International Development Education Association (VIDEA), Confluence 2017 brought together Mother tongue scholars from Uganda, Indigenous knowledge keepers and allies from Turtle Island (North America). The gathering celebrated 50 years of the first hearing of the prophecy of Mulembe Mutinzi Cuusansi, the prophecy which among other things states that white European knowledge is no longer enough to secure the survival of our planet. The ancient knowledges from the source of all humanity and the indigenous knowledges of other land-based peoples are needed to be brought to our global intellectual table if a sustainable, peaceful and just world is to be achieved.

When European contact was made in Uganda, political conquest and colonisation went hand in hand with concerted and on-going efforts to discredit and kill off the knowledge systems that had proven effective for many thousands of years. This epistemicide was particularly savage when it came to African spiritual traditions. Christianity and Islam claimed moral and intellectual superiority over traditional practices of prayer and grounding with the land. African spirituality was labelled as satanic. People who practice it are still, according to testimony at Confluence 2017 disrespected and despised. Confluence 2017 provided an opportunity for an equal and respectful exchange of ideas about knowledge and justice, about the re-emergence of the spiritual philosophy of 'Tondism'. Tondism, arising from that land where all human life began and with it all human spiritual and intellectual life, derives its name from the word Katonda, the African God of Peace.

Through drumming, dance, music, prayer, presentations, visits from and to African women and men spiritual leaders and traditional medicine practitioners, those participating experienced a truly transformative experience. The organizer, Wangoola Wangoola Ndawula noted that "Confluence 2017 has exceeded my expectations. This event which has unified and restored the confidence of many of Uganda's spiritual leaders and Mother tongue scholars in one of the most important achievements of this century".

Further note: Confluence 2017 concluded with the installation of the Saaba Kabona (the highest spiritual leader) Jumba Aligaweza of Tondism on May 24, 2017 in ceremonies held in the sacred site of the Walusi Hills in central Uganda.

Read the full blog post here: <http://unescochair-cbrsr.org/index.php/2017/05/26/mulembe-mutinze-cuusansi-the-great-turning-confluence-2017-exceeds-expectations/>

New position, towards enhanced engagement with PIMA and PASCAL

Peter Welsh

Peter Welsh was a long-serving member of the PASCAL (the Advisory) Board and subsequently of the PASCAL Advisory Council. He remains a PASCAL Associate who joined PIMA from its creation and

served as its first Vice-President. He occupied an innovation-directed think-tank position with the big powerful Kent County Council as a close colleague of Deputy Leader Alex King. Kent was then a strong PASCAL lead-regional authority and had its own PASCAL Cabinet Committee drawing from across all the main administrative portfolios. Peter with Alex was a key drive of this.

This work was terminated when austerity become the driving policy for the UK Government and Peter moved to private sector employment, still working mainly in the public sector and with civil society bodies. He both survived and thrived in this tough work environment but at a cost of time to play the role in PASCAL and PIMA for which he wished.

Peter writes as follows:

I am now Head of Evaluation at OPM Group (see below) leading a team of social scientists who are specialists in undertaking impact and evaluation research (quantitative and qualitative) for a wide range of government, public, charitable and private sector clients predominantly in the UK, although we are seriously beginning to expand work worldwide. Our new CEO came from the Foreign and Colonial Office (FCO).

The official description reads: OPM Group is an independent employee-owned research and consultancy organisation. We support and champion the delivery of social impact, and help people have a say in the decisions that affect them. We work with public, private and third sector organisations - as well as service users and communities – to ensure that services are designed and implemented efficiently, effectively and in the public interest. We deliver a range of services including:

- evaluation and impact analysis
- research and insight
- consultation and engagement
- coaching, mentoring and facilitation
- organisational development and change management

Our clients mainly work in

- health and social care
- local and central government
- the voluntary and community sector
- utilities, transport, infrastructure and the environment

We were established in 1989 as the UK's first employee-owned 'public interest company'. Since then, the landscape of public service delivery has changed immensely; but our commitment to social value still runs through all the work we do. We are proud of the social impact of our work and this motivates us to deliver high quality services and outcomes for our clients. In this new position Peter is positively encouraged to partner with PIMA and PASCAL to achieve, in the jargon, desirable impact and outcomes

In this new position Peter is positively encouraged to work closely with PIMA and PASCAL: My new employers www.opm.co.uk formerly the think tank The Office for Public Management are keen for me to engage in wider 'thought leadership' activities and should be supportive of my working with PASCAL.

7. Resources

Lifelong Education Research in East Asia

Professor Han SoongHee, a member of the PIMA Governing Korea, at Seoul National University (learn@snu.ac.kr), has just edited a special issue of the Springer APER journal *Asia Pacific Education Review*: <https://link.springer.com/journal/volumesAndIssues/12564>

As he explains, ‘I also wait paper copy published, and the publication is still hanging online publication’: It will be numbered vol 18 no.2 2017.’ SoongHee’s Editorial includes summaries of the eleven papers, mostly from East Asia. As his brief introduction to the volume explains this follows a special issue which he co-edited with Peter Jarvis co-edited of a special issue of the British *Comparative Education* journal with the theme of *The study of East and West in comparative education—towards a rationale*. This volume includes a chapter by Mike Osborne/ Professor of Lifelong Learning at the University of Glasgow and the Director of PASCAL Europe, which looks at the world of Asia, mainly in what the UK has long called the Far East, for comparison with approach and practices in Europe.

SoongHee and Jarvis earlier ‘wanted to investigate undiscovered possibilities in educational research of the East. We then put together articles that revealed cultural and historical peculiarities of education in the East, arguing that “difference in education is still important to our understanding of humanity”.’ This special issue of the Asian Pacific Education Review, edited at Seoul National University, Korea, and published by Springer, is another attempt of collaborative works on educational studies in the East, with the theme of ‘Theory Building in East Asia—Systems, Communities, and Work in adult education and lifelong learning’ to demonstrate Asian perspectives in theories on adult education and lifelong learning. Our problem-posing in this volume departs from a perception that the West has been ‘producing’ the world academic knowledge, especially the ‘theories,’ while the East was ‘consuming’ the theories. The ‘theories’ inevitably mirrored, in some sense, the dominance of global topographies and ethnocentrism of the West. Those theories are like the “songs that voices never share” in the East, as Simon and Garfunkel shouted in their famous song, *Sound of Silence*.

This special issue includes eleven papers that investigate adult education and lifelong learning in East Asia in various dimensions. The papers are put together in five groups: (1) Nature of theories and researches in the East, (2) traditional, social, and global impact on lifelong learning system, (3) adult education in community context, (4) works and expertise in professional adult learning, and (5) global comparison in formation of lifelong learning systems: Europe and Asia.’

UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education

The UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education held jointly by PIMA Members Rajesh Tandon in India and Budd Hall in Canada is a model of ‘South-North’ cooperation that exemplifies the good enabling role of UNESCO in the lifelong learning and social action field. It can be accessed via its Website or through Rajesh and Budd direct and is very widely networked. It is a great resource centre for PASCAL members who have an interest in socially responsible higher education. Its responsibilities include leading the Big Tent consortium of which PASCAL was a founding and continuing active member. Another example of its international networking role is Rajesh’s position as a Talloires governing body member by recent election. Talloires is also a de facto Big Tent leader.



8. Events and Networking Opportunities

Agenda Knowledge for Development

The *Agenda Knowledge for Development* (www.k4dp.org) is the result of a process covering more than two years, aimed at building a global knowledge partnership for the global advancement of peaceful, wealthy, sustainable and inclusive knowledge societies and to foster global knowledge partnerships for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and successfully implementing Agenda 2030. **Charlotte Scarf** who submitted a statement linking the Agenda to disability and development (see: <https://sites.google.com/k4dp.org/k4dp/agenda-knowledge-for-development>), explains that it has wide relevance to PIMA in terms of lifelong learning and the SDGs.

The first edition of the Agenda Knowledge for Development was presented to the Knowledge for Development Summit, held in Vienna, Austria, on 14 October 2016. After review and further contributions, a third, revised edition has been created and was presented in Geneva, Switzerland, on 3-4 April 2017 at the Knowledge for Development: Global Partnership Conference 2017, and can be downloaded at www.k4dp.org

As part of the Agenda Knowledge for Development, many leading individuals have contributed 73 statements in which they have put forward their personal views and perspectives on knowledge societies, representing diversity and richness of ideas, ambitions, experiences and commitments. Although most of the statements have been contributed by leading experts, we also have a small number of contributions from individuals at the beginning of their professional working lives. Together, we share a vision of how knowledge and knowledge societies can contribute to an inclusive approach to human development.

Managing Directors of Knowledge for Development Partnership Andreas Brandner and Sarah Cummings further explain: we want to let you know that the website is now online at www.k4dp.org. This work in progress website explains some of the background of the K4DP and of the Agenda Knowledge for Development. It aims to include stakeholder groups from all over the world to create, drive and implement the Agenda Knowledge for Development for better knowledge sharing and collaboration, increased competence in knowledge management, and better conditions for individual knowledge work. Please inform colleagues, friends and partners about the K4DP and invite them to become partners or members as well. The more we are, the stronger we are. Specifically we encourage you to invite your organisations to become members or at least partners of the K4DP.

The very ambitious next step of the K4DP is localisation of the Agenda in different regions. We are starting in parallel in Dubai/Abu Dhabi (Arab Region), Kampala (East Africa), Delhi (India), Lagos (West Africa), Tehran (Iran), Sofia (Eastern Europe), Amsterdam (Benelux), Geneva (CH, UN), New York (US, UN), Fiji (Pacific Region), and of course Vienna, where the K4DP has its headquarters. Any additional local initiative is invited to connect with K4DP as well. We look forward to working with you to build a vibrant Partnership which puts knowledge at the heart of development.

Regional Studies Association Central and Eastern Europe Conference – Cluj-Napoca, Romania, September 10-13, 2017

Over the last decades, new patterns of regional disparities and polarisation have developed in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) countries, drawing the attention of both researchers and policy-makers. Cohesion Policy responded to this challenge by focusing on balanced spatial development of the European regions. However, although achieving significant progress in developing towards the EU-average, CEE still faces serious internal spatial imbalances between metropolitan and non-

metropolitan areas, between core regions and peripheries. These and other issues will be addressed in a number of paper sessions. In addition, the conference has a strong focus on smart specialisation and offers a number of special sessions.

For more information on the conference, including the list of themes covered, please go to www.regionalstudies.org/conferences/conference/rsa-cee-cluj2017

5th World Forum for Lifelong Learning - Madrid, Spain, September 27-29, 2017

We are pleased to invite you to the 5th World Forum for Lifelong Learning in Madrid, Spain. This, the 5th World Forum, meets the messages of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted at the United Nations Summit on 25th September 2015, in areas of critical importance for Lifelong Learning and Education. Its objectives and content are identified accordingly to the UNESCO Education 2030 Agenda, which intends to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030”.

This far-reaching event offers a broad range of themes to involve you in debate on lifelong learning and education which can build sustainable development viewed through an integrated approach. The 5th World Forum is organized jointly by the World Committee for Lifelong Learning in Paris (CMA) and the National University of Distance Education (UNED) in Madrid, Spain, with support of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning in Hamburg (UIL), the Organization of Ibero-American States in Madrid (OEI), the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), and UNESCO-UNEVOC Center in Hong-Kong.

We hope you can join us in Madrid in September 2017. Yves Attou President of CMA, Marlena Bouche Director of the 5th Forum

For more information on the conference, please go to <https://www.worldforum-cma.fr/register/>

Lifelong Learning for All: Designing Sustainable Learning Society – Seoul, Korea, Oct 18-20, 2017

Global education research community faces yet another challenge on the verge of new industrial revolution in the 21st century. Driven by rapid and huge technological development, so called artificial intelligence and deep machine learning, we have to re-think what education and learning can and should do for the future. There are glooming scenarios that most of the human works, whether it is traditionally considered professional or simple manual repetition, will disappear once the new technology prevails over our daily lives. Some argue that competences needed in the age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution could be different from those in the information age and/or network society to which we have paid our attention for the last few decades.

In connection with this situation, the World Economic Forum (WEF) called for an understanding of the current situation, with the theme of the 2016 Davos Forum as "Understanding the Fourth Industrial Revolution." World Economic Forum (WEF) pointed out how technology will reorganize the lives of economics, society, culture, and the human environment. The World Economic Forum (WEF) has raised the need to share a global perspective on this issue.

More precisely, the WEF predicts that by 2025, 10% of the population will wear apparel connected to the Internet, one trillion sensors are to be connected to the Internet, a robot pharmacist will appear, 10% of the population will wear glasses connected to the Internet, 80% of the population will have digital presence and big data will be applied for making a census.

To prepare for this, policymakers and business leaders demand coding education to prepare students with skills to communicate with machines that learn and think independently.

The argument raised in relation to this fourth industrial revolution leads to the point that the current education system is not following these changes. The WEF has proposed 16 core technologies under the name of '21st century technology'. However, it is not known whether these proposals are sufficiently examined in the academic and educational fields.

Besides this unprecedented challenge, we also observe a global paradigm change in education policy. In 2015, the World Education Forum led by UNESCO along with UNDP, UNICEF, UN Refugee Agency, UN Population Fund, and World Bank Group adopted Incheon Declaration— Towards Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All. It replaced Education for All, which was a UNESCO version of Millennium Development Goal between 2000 and 2015. Incheon Declaration confirms the needs for continuous global education efforts against old and new obstacles we have to overcome for the sustainable future of every human being. Inclusiveness, equity, quality and lifelong learning are key concepts indicating new global education policy direction. Thus, by 2030, countries around the world will provide high-quality compulsory education for at least nine years guaranteeing right to education for all, regardless of gender, welfare, or disability. Through the promotion of subsequent lifelong learning, efforts have been made to strengthen higher education and vocational education.

The 18th International Conference on Education Research (ICER) wants to call your attention to this unusual moment of challenge and change. We set this year's ICER theme as "Lifelong Learning for All – Designing Sustainable Learning Society". The organizing committee invites you to present theoretical papers and empirical studies on the following thematic sessions.

1. Sustainable Development Goals and Lifelong Learning for All
2. Higher Education for Lifelong Learners – Repositioning and Restructuring
3. Faces of Adult Learning in Learning Society
4. 4th Industrial Revolution and Innovation in Continuing Education – Futuristic Perspectives
5. Lifelong Learning Policy Responses to the 4th Industrial Revolution
6. MOOCs for Lifelong Learning Society
7. New Competences and Creativity in Future Workforces

We also invite you to propose new thematic sessions based upon your expertise and experiences regarding the conference theme. Also, as ICER has always been an open platform for you to exchange your knowledge and concerns on education for the last 17 years, our call for papers is not limited to the conference theme. If you have any papers or posters to share with international attendees, feel free to submit your proposal.

Contributions Responses to news items and opinion pieces, other feedback and material for publication are always welcome. Please send to Chris Duke at: chris.duke@rmit.edu.au